

REMARKS

Responsive to the Office Action mailed January 23, 2008, Applicants provide the following. Claims 2, 14, 16, 19-22, 49, 53, 57-58 and 61 have been amended, where specifically, claim 61 was amended to be in independent form incorporating the limitations of canceled claim 1, and claims 2, 14, 16, 19-22, 53 and 57-58 are amended to depend from claim 61. Claims 1, 5-9, 12-13, 18, 23-44, 51, 55-56, 60 and 64 have been canceled where claims 5-9, 12-13, 18, 27-31, 40 and 51 were previously canceled. Therefore, twenty-nine (29) claims remain pending in the application: claims 2-4, 10-11, 14-17, 19-22, 45-50, 52-54, 57-59, 61-63 and 65. Reconsideration of claims 2-4, 10-11, 14-17, 19-22, 45-50, 52-54, 57-59, 61-63 and 65 in view of the amendments above and remarks below is respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the identification that claims 45-50, 52 and 65 are allowed and the Examiner's indication that claims 61-63 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By way of this response, Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain any outstanding issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned at (858) 552-1311 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

1. Claims 1-4, 10, 11, 16-17, 19-26, 32, 33, 38, 39, 41-44 and 53-56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,699,384 (Dillon) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,005,565 (Legall et al.) and U.S. Patent No. 5,982,363 (Naiff). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claim 1, however, has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in order to pursue the timely issuance of the allowable subject matter. Although this claim is canceled herein, Applicants are not conceding in this application that this claim is not patentable over the cited references. Applicants reserve the right to pursue at a later date

any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Specifically, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of canceled claim 1, as well as other subject matter within the application, in one or more continuing applications. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that the Applicants have made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections are rendered moot.

2. Claim 61 is indicated as allowable. Applicants have amended claim 61 to incorporate the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 61 is in condition for allowance.

Further, claims 2, 14, 16, 19-22, 53 and 57-58 are amended to depend from claim 61. Therefore, claims 2-4, 10-11, 14-17, 19-22, 52-54, 57-59 and 62-63 are also patentable due at least to their dependency on allowed claim 61.

3. Claims 14, 15, 36 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Dillon, Naiff and Legall in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,216,264 (Maze et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections in that at least claims 14, 15, 36 and 37 depend from allowable claim 61. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections are rendered moot.

4. Claims 34 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Dillon, Naiff and Legall in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,208,384 (Schultheiss). Claims 34 and 35, however, have been canceled. Therefore, these rejections are rendered moot.

5. Claim 57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Dillon, Naiff and Legall and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,266,814 (Lemmons et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 57, however, has been amended to depend from allowable claim 61. Therefore, claim 57 is allowable due at least in part to its dependency on allowable claim 61.

6. Claims 58-60 and 64 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Dillon, Naiff and Legall and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,405,267 (Zhoa et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Claims 58-59 and 64 depend from allowable claim 61. Therefore, claims 58-59 and 65 are allowable due at least in part to their dependency on allowable claim 61.

Allowable Subject Matter

7. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 45-50, 52 and 65 are allowable.

Claims 61-63 have been indicated as allowable if amended to be in independent form incorporating the limitations of the base claim. Claim 61 has been amended to be in independent form and to incorporate the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 61 and the claims that depend from claim 61 are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the above amendments and remarks put the claims and application in a condition for allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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